

Sinclair Broadcasting's decision to force their stations to air an anti-Kerry documentary days before the election is a clear example of the dangers of media consolidation.

A few months ago Sinclair forbade its ABC affiliates from airing a Nightline tribute to American soldiers slain in Iraq, saying it was anti-war propaganda. Come again?? Honoring those who lost their lives serving this country is anti-war propaganda?

After 9/11, the company demanded that their stations express allegiance to the Bush administration on the air. At the same time, Sinclair gives over 97% of their political contributions to GOP candidates, and they force their stations to air -- as part of their 'local' news -- ultra-conservative commentary from Sinclair's chief lobbyist, Mark Hyman.

Sinclair uses the public airwaves free of charge, and is obligated by law to serve the public interest. But when large companies control the airwaves, we get more of what's good for the bottom line and less of what we need for our democracy. Instead of something produced at "News Central" far away, it's more important that we see real people from our own communities and more substantive news about issues that matter.

Sinclair's actions show why we need to strengthen media ownership rules, not weaken them. They show why the license renewal process needs to involve more than a returned postcard. Thank you.